

29er Rescue Guide

(With thanks to the 29er Class & RS 800 Class)

The aim of this guide is to help safety boats recover 29ers without causing harm to the sailors or their boats.

The Boat:

The 29er is a trapeze asymmetric skiff with a fibreglass hull. They aren't as easy to tow compared to other junior / youth classes and there are a few things you need to be aware of before recovering the boat.

The 29er has glass fibre masts/ bow sprits and often carbon tiller extensions – these can damage / puncture rib tubes if they have broken as they tend to leave sharp ends and splinters. Be careful with handling any broken piece of carbon as splinters really hurt if they get into your hands etc



Carbon Tiller extensions.

Most people sail with these as they are lighter and give more feel than the aluminium extensions. However, they do break if given enough abuse. Most people carry spare tiller extensions either on or in the boom but will probably need to capsize the boat to retrieve them in all but the lightest winds. **People can generally sort this out without assistance.**

Risk of rope entrapment during a capsize.

Once capsized there are numerous ropes for the helm and crew to get caught in (main, spinnaker, jib sheets, trapeze lines etc). Most people tend to carry knives on their person. If the boat does invert there is little air space underneath the hull. **Urgent assistance may be required.**

A quick way to create air space if someone is trapped and the boat is inverted is to go straight to the bow and lift the bow up by grabbing the hull. Do not lift the bow sprit, as it will snap thus not create airspace but cause more problems. Lifting slightly will create an air space and can be a short-term fix.

29er class rules require sailors to carry a whistle.

If a boat is struggling to get upright

This might happen to lighter teams when the boat keeps flipping over. As a safety boat, go to the bow and hold the boat head to wind and then the sailors can right the boat and get in. If they are really struggling – go to the mast and slowly pull the boat upright and the boat can naturally come alongside. If the sailors have got it half upright, encourage them to let off kicker and pull on lots of downhaul. This will flatten the sail and make it easier. If one sailor can't get in the boat – ask the sailor in the boat to lean the boat to windward and scoop the other sailor in.

Sailor overboard

A RIB CAN GO RESCUE A SAILOR IF THEY FALL IN AND GET SEPARATED FROM THE BPAT. They have to ask the sailor if they would like help. If they say no, you can still intervene if you deem the separation a safety risk.

Collision – impact damage

Given the speed potential of the boat serious damage can occur when boats come together. Often this occurs at leeward mark roundings and involves bow sprit or wing corner impacts, this can be serious. The hull can be damaged by the pointed corners. If this occurs near / at the waterline, the boat will take on large amounts of water, the boat will probably need recovering a.s.a.p., but given the water in the hull it is best towed alongside. **Urgent assistance may be required.**

Pitch Pole downwind in rough conditions.

If windy with rough seas, the 29er can pitch pole going downwind. In this instance the crew and helm may be violently flung from the boat, often still attached to the trapeze lines and can sustain serious injury if they hit anything on the way e.g. mast, shrouds, each other forestay etc. Boats tend to also invert in this type of capsize as outlined above. **Urgent assistance may be required.**

Collisions Downwind

The 29er can have limited visibility downwind due to the spinnaker blocking an area of vision. In addition to this in windy conditions the helms may have a limited ability to alter the course steered which is more determined by the wind pressure. **Urgent assistance may be required**



Coming Alongside

A 29er might need to come alongside inbetween races for food or to fix breakages. Be careful of their gunwhale and hitting the solid parts of a rib. They can come alongside fairly easily – see picture below and sit quite comfortably in all winds. It is more difficult in waves. Make sure you are head to wind.

Towing

Towing alongside. The easiest way to tow a 29er is alongside with the wing of the 29er sat on the side of your RIB. Put (windward) wing over rib tube and sailors leg either side. Dagger board half up. Rib crew pull down on trapeze handle. Ideally also take bow line of the 29er and wrap round mast or hog). Just wrap around mast 2 times and 29er crew holds tail. Helm of 29er steers slightly towards the rib. Best not to drop sails unless very windy as the boat stability is not changed and dropping takes time. It is generally possible to tow two boats in this way. The safety boat crew will need to be constantly attentive to the boats remaining on the RIB tubes as it is easy for them to separate risking for the 29er sailor to fall down between the two. If the towing distance is long or if there is only one sailor left on board it is advisable to tie the 29er alongside with one line through the bow fitting and another through the scupper opening in the transom. In big seas even this may not always work, but one boat should be ok, always on the leeward side.



Towing on a line. Assuming the boat is manned and can steer it should also be possible to tow the boat by leading a line through the bow fitting and once round the mast support under the thwart and the end held by the 29er crew to enable quick release if necessary (e.g. if they are about to capsize). Do not tow around the mast itself as this will weaken/pull out the mast step fixings. Make sure the daggerboard is half up. If unsure only tow 1-2 boats at a time. If confident you can take a few more.

If its windier and/or a boat is damaged, make sure the sails are down. If easier, put the sails in the boat so they don't fall overboard.

If the RIB is large enough & you have enough people to manhandle the boat and the mast is down, a 29er can be recovered by lifting it across the bow of the RIB. Foils need to be removed.

Taking sails down

Get a boat alongside before you can take a sail down. Be head to wind and ask the sailors to help. If they can't – try not to go straight to cutting halyards, they are a nightmare to fix. Untangle the halyards and the sails do come down quickly. Do one at a time.

Mast snaps

If the mast snaps, a sailor can be quite distressed. The best thing to do is get the sailors in the boat and to get the boat upright as it is easier to sort. Whenever a mast has snapped I always try to get all the bits I can back in the boat. First is sails and to make sure everything is untied from the hull eg take shrouds off, forestay, sails, ropes etc. Once all that is cleared strap the rest down into the boat so you are able to tow the boat.

Other breakages

Recently I have had a few foils snap – best thing to do is revert back to righting the boat from the mast. And then get the boat alongside.

Cutting Rigging

In a last resort, bolt croppers can be used to cut away the rig to enable the mast to be dropped. Generally 1 shroud and the forestay will suffice. Bolt croppers are carried by the Course Safety Lead.

Any questions email coach@29ersailing.org.uk

Useful video for righting the boat <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeiMm7MaQG0>